

MEMORANDUM

**SUBJECT: Soviet-North Vietnamese Railroad
Equipment Agreement**

1. The Western press has recently repeated the 7 August announcement by the USSR that an agreement had been concluded for the supply to North Vietnam of unidentified Soviet railroad equipment. There is no information on this agreement from other sources.

2. The transaction was made public not long after the arrival in Moscow of the Vietnamese deputy transport minister. It was apparently responsive to a request by Hanoi for assistance in meeting anticipated destruction of rail equipment. Vietnam is also short of specialized equipment, such as tank cars, which probably are most readily available in the USSR.

3. Soviet export of railroad equipment to Hanoi has heretofore been limited to specialized equipment, such as ore-loading vehicles and small industrial-type locomotives. The bulk of North Vietnam's rail equipment is of Chinese origin. East European countries have also provided some equipment for Vietnamese railroads.

4. We have no information on recent Chinese agreement to purchase railroad equipment from the USSR.

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Remarks: The following was prepared in response to Congressman Lipscomb's question to the DCI at last week's briefing of the Mahan Committee. KW			
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